

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 6 November 2013

2.00-3.50 p.m. in A204

Present: Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Professor John Costello, Dr John Doyle, Dr Sarah Ingle, Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Lisa Looney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Barry McMullin, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Mr Martin Molony, Mr Ciarán O'Connor, Dr Anne Sinnott, Dr Sheelagh Wickham

Apologies: Professor Alan Harvey

In attendance: Ms Aisling McKenna

On behalf of the Education Committee, the Chair congratulated Dr Mac Murchaidh on his appointment as Head of Fiontar. She noted that this would necessitate his stepping down from membership of the EC and that this present meeting would therefore be his last, and expressed appreciation to him for his significant contribution to the EC during his three years of membership.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 2 October 2013

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Ms McKenna noted that she would shortly add a table of contents to the folder on Google Drive which she had set up to make available to EC members and Programme Chairs the various reports she produces for the EC, as well as relevant associated documentation. (Item 3.2)
- 3.2** It was noted that the protocol on the use of students' mobile telephone numbers was being drawn up. (See also Item 6.1 below.) (Item 3.4)
- 3.3** The Chair noted that she had discussed with the Data Protection Officer and the Director of Registry the issues relating to the use of alumni contact details and that no problems were foreseen. Information gleaned from HEA First Destinations surveys (see Item 6 below) needs to be erased once it has been used for its intended purposes, and the Data Protection Officer will discuss this with the Director of Student Support and Development. (Item 3.4)
- 3.4** It was noted that a further presentation on e-portfolios would be made to the EC as soon as possible. (Item 3.5)
- 3.5** It was noted that the Chair and the Director of Quality Promotion had discussed ownership issues with respect to Annual Programme Review and Periodic Programme Review. With respect to APR, it was noted that ownership lies with Faculties. The very considerable technical work that has been done to ensure the population of APR templates with relevant data was noted with approval, as was the provision of associated training, although some issues remain with respect to timing (e.g. the external examiners' reports from November Progression and Awards Boards are not available at the same time as other data). It was agreed that Ms McKenna would investigate the extent, if any, to which service teaching issues impact on access to APR data in cross-Faculty programmes. PPR documentation is on the OVPAA web page (though it will be moved to a more appropriate location on this page when possible); consideration is to be given to making it available also on the web pages of Faculties and of the Quality Promotion Office. With respect to the ownership of PPR, the importance of having the EC maintain oversight of the process and the templates was noted, as was the need for APR and PPR processes to be organised in tandem with each other as appropriate. It was agreed that there would not be a need to insert a specific question on retention into the PPR template because the issue is already covered under APR; however, it will be important to ensure that the relevant data is obtainable via OBIEE. It was noted that Dr Ingle includes information on PPR in the annual report she provides to QQI in respect of quality promotion work in the University. It was agreed that protocols around

access to PPR reports needed to be drawn up. A brief report on PPR activities 2012/13 and

the PPR schedule for 2013/14 will be made to the EC at its meeting of 4 December 2013. (Items 3.6, 6.2 and 6.4)

- 3.7** It was noted that the meeting of the Accreditation Board for the proposed MSc in Chronic Disease Management had taken place on 18 October 2013, that the programme had been recommended for accreditation and that (subject to Academic Council approval) it would be launched in September 2014. (Item 3.7)
- 3.8** It was noted that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education were discussing the issues relating to the policy on assessment and would make recommendations to the EC at its meeting of 4 December 2013. (Item 3.8)
- 3.9** It was noted that the working group on approval procedures would shortly begin its activities; a proposal on first steps has been made. (Item 3.10)
- 3.10** It was noted that a short-life working group to discuss and make recommendations in respect of modules for which failure rates are high would shortly be established. (Item 6.2)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Update on activities undertaken within the IUA

- 4.1** The Chair noted issues arising from the IUA meetings of 14 October 2013 and, specifically, from the meeting of the Registrars. With respect to the principles on CAO entry approved by the Academic Councils of all the universities over the past number of months, progress is required on a number of fronts: a reversion, by 2015, to the numbers of CAO codes per institution that obtained in 2011; a further reduction of 10% in these numbers by 2016; work towards common minimum entry and discipline-specific requirements; analysis of the impact of the forthcoming reduction in Leaving Certificate grade bands from eleven to six; consideration (though with less urgency than pertains to the other items above) of the use of supplementary admission requirements. It was noted that it would be very important for DCU not to be disadvantaged relative to other institutions by virtue of the work on these issues, and in particular the reduction in CAO codes and possible changes to programme entry requirements, and agreed that relevant statistical data would be prepared as a basis for discussions. The Chair noted her intention to set up two working groups within the University, one policy focused and the other operations focused, to discuss the range of issues listed above and make

recommendations; the terms of reference of these groups are available, and the membership lists will be circulated as soon as possible. (It was noted that no

timeline has as yet been outlined for the completion, sectorally, of all the relevant work.) There will also be a smaller, complementary working group designed to discuss and make recommendations on non-CAO admissions.

- 4.2** Following from the meeting of IUA Deans of Graduate Studies, Dr Looney noted the following:
- notwithstanding the current significant shortage of relevant funding, a document to underpin the development of collaborative programmes under PRTLTI had been negotiated and signed, and she would shortly make it available to the Chair
 - another document, relating to the legal status of joint awards, had been drawn up, and the Chief Operating Officer had provided a document on behalf of DCU to indicate that the University is in good financial standing; Dr Looney undertook to make these two documents available together
 - an IUA working group has been established with a view to streamlining engagement, on a sectoral basis, with PhD students funded by overseas governments (specifically, to clarify what can reasonably be required from the funders)
 - progress has been made with respect to the development of a sectoral, consortium-based approach to the purchase of online training tools, with a view to prudent management of resources and avoidance of duplication; in this connection, the forthcoming arrival of the new Professor of Digital Learning was noted as being likely to be very helpful
 - with respect to the HEA/QQI *Engagement document: towards the establishment of a national framework for doctoral education*, it is expected that institutions will shortly be issued with a formal request for engagement.
- 4.3** With respect to the meeting of IUA Directors of Quality Promotion, Dr Ingle noted that the consultation process on the Review of Reviews was due to start shortly and that the International Education Mark was expected to be made available in 2014. She also noted that work was in progress with respect to the establishment of quality assurance procedures relating to linked, collaborative and transnational partners and that she would be requesting feedback from the EC on what was proposed.
- 4.4** The Chair noted that no further work was planned at the present time in relation to the sectoral review of capacity in Engineering programmes which had been mooted.

5. Report on the Irish Survey of Student Engagement

Mr Kelly and Ms McKenna noted that a meeting of a range of DCU stakeholders would take place on 19 November 2013 to discuss and analyse the ISSE findings from the DCU perspective. Ms McKenna undertook to make available to the EC data on DCU outcomes relative to sectoral outcomes. The full report on the 2013 ISSE will be launched on 3 December 2013, and it will be important that the University be in a state of readiness to respond to any queries arising from this. The report will be discussed by the EC at its meeting of 4 December 2013. It will be important, in the near future, to identify the optimum window in Spring 2014 during which the 2014 survey is made available in the University.

6. HEA First Destinations data 2013

6.1 In the course of Ms McKenna's presentation on this issue, and in the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:

- the list of top employers needs to be read in the context of the fact that a very wide range of organisations is represented and few of these employ very large numbers of graduates
- information obtained some months post graduation tends to be of much better quality than information obtained at graduation, particularly with respect to the relevance of the type of employment to the qualification obtained; in this connection, the fact that it will shortly become possible to use students' mobile telephone numbers (see Item 3.2 above) is likely to be very helpful
- the First Destinations survey is by no means an ideal instrument for surveying doctoral graduates; it would be more useful to survey such graduates a number of years (say five) post graduation; however, the HEA currently lacks funds to develop a survey tailored to such graduates
- in a general sense, consideration might be given to repeating the survey some years from graduation for all graduates, though account would need to be taken of data protection issues
- the decrease in the numbers of those undertaking Level 9 programmes, at DCU or elsewhere, in the past few years is striking
- it would be very helpful for Careers Office staff to have online access to the First Destinations data as a means of enhancing their ability to advise students; this is to be addressed
- employer data is to be obtained on a 3-5-year rolling basis, rather than as a snapshot in time, with a view to providing more nuanced information about employment obtained.

6.2 Ms McKenna undertook to make available to the EC information on the number/proportion of graduates employed by the companies in which they had done their INTRA placement; Dr Bohan noted that this would be of particular interest to her.

6.3 On behalf of the EC, the Chair expressed appreciation to Ms McKenna for her considerable work in compiling and presenting the First Destinations data.

7. EC goals 2013/2014: finalised list

The Chair expressed appreciation to Ms McKenna for her work on clarifying the alignment between goals identified in *Transforming Lives and Societies*, goals identified in the component strategic plans, and the EC goals. She noted that it would not be realistic or appropriate to assume that alignment should be total. The EC goals were approved. It was agreed that the final version (updated as necessary to reflect very recent developments) would be circulated to the EC.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

8. Validation proposal: MSc in Public Policy

- 8.1** The following recommendations were made with respect to this proposal:
- the proposers are requested to make available a revised version of the proposal with a number of potentially problematic references deleted
 - the reference to median score of 60% (with respect to eligibility for the internship) should be appropriately reworded, as it is opaque.
 - the role and purpose of the internship would need to be clarified, as would the absence of credits for it; clarification would also be needed about the effect on a student of not completing an internship when peers would have completed one; consideration might be given to integrating the internship with the dissertation element of the proposed programme
 - it will be very important to ensure appropriate professional distance, as per regulations, with respect to the membership of the Accreditation Board
 - the module to be provided by DCU Business School (Economic Theory and Practice) should have a Business School code rather than a School of Law and Government code.
- 8.2** It was agreed that the Validation Subgroup would meet on 14 November 2013 to consider the proposal in detail and discuss the issues at 8.1 above, and any other relevant issues, with the programme proposers.

9. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 4 December 2013, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____